

Yet they could not satisfy him. For whereas with most writers either the love of beauty tends to blind the love of truth or else the love of truth to deaden the love of beauty, with Flaubert the two were curiously matched.

In his eyes, however hungry for beauty, often ugliness was truth, truth ugliness; and with that truth he would not palter. Besides, ugliness fascinated him, as well as repelled. Hence comes that oscillation, often noted, in his successive works between the romantic and the prosaic, between the 'princesse lointaine' and the grisette. *Saint Antoine*, *Madame Bovary*, *Salammbô*, *V Education Sentimentale*, *Trois Contes*, *Bouvard et Pecuchet*—throughout that series the pendulum swings back and forth with a beautiful and mathematical regularity. Every second work Yuk claims for his own. Now Yuk has his adorers among the readers of Flaubert; but I feel him to have been on the whole Flaubert's evil spirit.

It is not that I prefer Flaubert's exotic works; on the contrary. But it was Yuk who drove him so far afield in the struggle to escape. In four ways, I think, this obsession with human ugliness and imbecility was bad for his writing. Sometimes it made him over-romantic by sheer reaction; sometimes it made him indulge in squalid photography or in over-prolonged caricature; always it made him shrink too much from life; and it made him think too much of art. He seems to me to have

produced
one masterpiece, in which for once his
opposite impulses
balanced and his drab greys blended with his
purples in a
perfect harmony—Madame Bovary: a
masterpiece so great
that his fame need rest on little else. A great
subject—the
death of romance in the human soul; two
outstanding
characters, one tragic through all her
pettiness, the other
almost magnificent in his pompous absurdity;
the beauty
of perfect landscape and of perfect language;
a pervading